

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13613

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (CARTER,MRS. LILLIAN)

SUBJECT: MRS. LILLIAN CARTER'S MEETING WITH ITALIAN PRESIDENT
PERTINI

1. MRS. LILLIAN CARTER HAD A 30-MINUTE MEETING ON JULY 21 WITH
THE NEW ITALIAN PRESIDENT, ALESSANDRO PERTINI. THE SESSION,
HELD IN PERTINI'S STUDY IN THE QUIRINALE PALACE WAS ATTENDED
ALSO BY AMBASSADOR GARDNER AND ANTONIO MACCANICO, SECRETARY
GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENTS OFFICE. FROM BEGINNING TO END THE
CONVERSATION WAS MARKED BY A CORDIALITY, SYMPATHY AND INFORMAL
DIRECTNESS
THAT WAS ENTIRELY NATURAL AND SPONTANEOUS ON BOTH PARTS. THE
FOLLOWING ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THEIR CONVERSATION.

2. AT THE OUTSET OF THE MEETING PRESIDENT PERTINI ASKED MRS.
CARTER IF SHE HAD ANY ADVICE FOR HIM AS HE BEGINS HIS SEVEN-
YEAR TERM OF OFFICE. MRS CARTER REPLIED, "JUST DO WHAT YOU
HAVE BEEN DOING ALL YOUR LIFE--FIGHTING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND
HELPING THE POOR". TO MRS. CARTER'S COUNTERQUESTION WHETHER
PRESIDENT PERTINI HAD ANY MESSAGE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER, PERTINI
REPLIED THAT HIS ADVICE WAS THAT HE SHOULD FOLLOW THE
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EXAMPLE OF HIS MOTHER IN HER CONCERN TO ALLEVIATE HUNGER
AND HARDSHIP. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD LIKE HER TO TELL
PRESIDENT CARTER HOW MUCH HE ADMIRERD WHAT HE HAS BEEN
DOING FOR PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN HELPING THE
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

2. THERE THEN ENSUED A DISCUSSION OF OLD AGE AND WHAT

IT MEANT. WHEN MRS. CARTER JESTED THAT LIFE BEGINS AT 80, PERTINI AGREED AND STATED THAT AGE WAS NOT A MATTER OF CHRONOLGY. SOME PERSONS ARE BORN OLD, SOME ARE BORN YOUNG AND STAY YOUNG ALL THEIR LIFE--"LIKE YOU AND ME".

3. THERE WAS ALSO SOME GOOD-NATURED BANTER ABOUT PERTINI'S FAMOUS COLLECTION OF 200 PIPES. MRS. CARTER INSISTED THAT THE PIPE WHICH SHE WISHED TO PRESENT PERTINI WAS FOR SERIOUS SMOKING AND NOT FOR DISPLAY IN A COLLECTION. PERTINI PROMISED THAT HE WOULD DO AS SHE REQUESTED. IN RETURN FOR THE PIPE, PRESIDENT PERTINI LATER SENT TO MRS. CARTER A CAMEO AND SHAWL WHICH HE HAD PERSONALLY PURCHASED FOR HER.

4. THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION MRS. CARTER'S SIMPLE DIRECTNESS HAD A GREAT APPEAL TO PERTINI WHO REMARKED AT ONE POINT IN ESSENCE, "YOU ARE LIKE ME--YOU SAY WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND AND IN YOUR HEART." CONCLUDING THE MEETING PERTINI SAID "MRS. CARTER, THIS THIRTY-MINUTE SESSION HAS BEEN A CELEBRATION OF HUMANE VALUES."

5. AFTER THE MEETING ANTONIO MACCANICO TOLD AMBASSADOR GARDNER THAT IN WITNESSING THE CONVERSATION, HE WAS ALMOST IN TEARS BY THE DEEP AFFINITY WHICH THE TWO PERSONS CLEARLY FELT FOR ONE ANOTHER AND BECAUSE OF THEIR OBVIOUS MUTUAL INTEREST IN EQUALITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE
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AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. MRS. CARTER'S CALL ON PERTINI COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A BETTER TIME. PERTINI, ELECTED LESS THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE MEETING, CAN BE HIGHLY IRASCIBLE AND IN THE PAST HAS BEEN QUITE CRITICAL OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. IT IS CLEAR THAT PERTINI WAS COMPLETELY WON OVER BY MRS. CARTER PERSONAL MANNER AND BY THE PURPOSE OF HER TRIP. THE CALL ALMOST SURELY HAS DONE MUCH TO SOFTEN HIS EARLIER CRITICAL ATTITUDE AND TO PUT HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ON A FRIENDLY FOOTING. AS A RESULT, THE MEETING WAS NOT ONLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH FOR MRS. CARTER BUT A GENUINE SUCCESS FOR AMERICAN INTERESTS IN ITALY. GARDNER

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